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*For Immediate Release*

*Chief Judge Sara W. Combs*

### **Court of Appeals Chief Judge Sara W. Combs serves as presenter at national summit on child protection**

FRANKFORT, Ky., Oct. 31, 2005 — Court of Appeals Chief Judge Sara W. Combs served as a presenter at the National Leadership Summit on the Protection of Children in Bloomington, Minn., in September. Chief Judge Combs' address was titled "Walking the Talk on Expediting Appeals: Successfully Overcoming the Obstacles."

Participants at the conference focused on identifying ways to improve and measure how well courts process child protection cases. The national event was a joint effort of the National Center for State Courts, the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

"This summit helped shine a light on a very real problem in this country," said Chief Judge Combs. "It was a unique opportunity to share ideas with other states on how to help neglected and abused children get faster resolution in the courts when it comes to custody issues and placement in permanent homes."

Judge Combs was elected chief judge of the Kentucky Court of Appeals in 2004 and is the first woman to be elected to serve in this capacity. She began her service with appellate courts in 1993 when she became the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court of Kentucky.

In addition to Chief Judge Combs, Kentucky was represented at the conference by Chief Justice Joseph E. Lambert; Jefferson Family Court Judge Patricia Walker Fitzgerald; retired Jefferson Family Court Judge Richard Fitzgerald; Penny Warren, general manager of Mediation and Family Court Services for the Administrative Office of the Courts; and Patrick Yewell, general manager of the Department of Juvenile Services for the AOC.

The Kentucky Court of Appeals, along with the Supreme Court of Kentucky, was formed after the 1975 enactment of the Judicial Article that created Kentucky's unified court system. Fourteen judges, two elected from each of the seven appellate districts, serve on the Court of Appeals for terms of eight years. With a few exceptions, most cases appealed from Circuit Court go to the Court of Appeals. The case is not retried at the appeals level. Instead, the original trial record is reviewed, with attorneys presenting the legal issues to the court for a decision. ###